Urban Forest Management Plan
Draft Outline
January 9, 2012

VISION

Austin's urban forest is a healthy and sustainable mix of trees, vegetation, and other components that comprise a contiguous and thriving ecosystem valued, protected, and cared for by the City and all of its citizens as an essential environmental, economic, and community asset.

OUTLINE

1. Vision Statement
2. Executive Summary
3. Guiding Principles in order (values to be considered at each level)
   a. Greatest Good Philosophy
   b. Wise Use of Resources
   c. Sustainable
   d. Science-Based Decision Making
   e. Public Safety
   f. Industry Recognized Best Management Practices
4. Define the Resource
   a. Ecosystem
      i. Sample Inventory
      ii. STRATUM
      iii. Canopy Coverage Analysis
         1. Texas State University - Street Tree Shade Index
         2. Ramos' Park Canopy Coverage Analysis
      iv. Workorder Analysis (Frequency of Care, etc)
   b. Human Resource
      i. Staff
      ii. Partnerships
         1. Internal
         2. External
      iii. Citizens
         1. Stewards
         2. Advocates
         3. Volunteers
   c. Infrastructure
      i. Equipment
      ii. Irrigation
5. Recommendations
   a. Six Vision Components
      i. Thriving
         1. Goal
            a. Opportunities, Challenges and Threats

<div style="margin-left: 4em">

  b. Performance Measures
    i. Implementation Schedule
    ii. Responsible Entities
  c. Identification of Resources and Unmet Needs
    i. Funding
    ii. Staff

</div>

   ii. Contiguous
   iii. Healthy
   iv. Valued
   v. Protected
   vi. Cared for

 b. Summary of Recommendations
   i. Budget
   ii. Timeline
   iii. Revision Schedule

6. Supporting Documents and Appendices
 a. Regulation
   i. City Code Chapter 6 – Trees and Vegetation
   ii. City Code Chapter 25 – Trees and Development
   iii. Endangered Species Act
   iv. TDA Pesticide Application Rules
   v. Federal Law for Utility Line Clearance
 b. Policy
   i. Environmental Criteria Manual
   ii. Transportation Criteria Manual
   iii. Oak Wilt
   iv. Urban Design Standards
   v. Great Streets
 c. Professional Standards
   i. ANSI Z133 Safety Standards
   ii. ANSI A300 Tree Care
   iii. ANSI Z60.1 Nursery Stock
 d. Standard Operating Procedures
   i. Safety
   ii. Inspections
   iii. Operations and Administration
   iv. GIS and GPS units
 e. Organizational Structure
   i. Urban Forestry Program
   ii. Other Programs
 f. Supporting Plans
   i. Climate Protection Plan
   ii. Invasive Species Management Plan
   iii. Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan
   iv. Balcones Canyonlands Preserve Plan
   v. Integrated Pest Management Plan

Content of #5 Recommendations taken from the outline above

12-19-11 The UFB Management Plan Working Group reached consensus that the seven vision components comprise the framework of this section of the plan and directed staff to proceed with the next level.

Staff went forward and inserted the specific comments from board members April Rose, Tom Hayes and Nick Classen from the Google Doc into one of the seven vision components below into the 'Raw Material' heading. The results of the staff brainstorming session were also applied in this way. The intent of this action was to create a body of work, none of which staff is 'married to', that the board may start from and edit and revise.

A definition was created from the 'Raw Material' to explain what for example a 'Thriving Urban Forest' actually means.

Also, an example of how a Goal (used to strive toward one of the seven vision components) is broken down under the vision component 'Thriving' and includes Challenges and Threats, Performance Measure and Identification of necessary resources.

01-09-12 The UFB Management Plan Working Group reached consensus on the above outline in its entirety including prioritizing the Guiding Principles as written here. They also made several changes to the content of #5 Recommendations including going from seven vision components down to six – 'Sustainable' is now a guiding principle. They refined the definitions of the Six Vision Components in preparation for the Retreat and decided that participants at the Retreat should focus on identifying Goals which strive towards each Vision Component, followed by Opportunities, Challenges and Threats to each Goal and finally an exercise to prioritize those Goals under each Vision Component. It was decided that 'Performance Measures' and 'Identification of Resources and Unmet Needs' should not be the focus of this initial retreat. The 'Raw Material' heading under each of the six Vision Components is now titled 'Ideas'. The vision statement was changed from '…sustainable mix of trees that comprises…' to '…sustainable mix of trees, vegetation, and other components that comprise…'

5) Recommendations

a) Six Vision Components
   i. **Thriving (quantity of canopy)**
      <u>Definition:</u> A thriving urban forest is one that is optimized according to site and ecosystem capacity.
      <u>Ideas:</u> High stocking rate. Intelligent canopy coverage rates based on ecosystem type.
      1. Goal: More trees are planted than are lost resulting in a net gain.
         a. Opportunities, Challenges and Threats:
            i. Development
            ii. Drought
            iii. Growing space above and below ground
         b. Performance Measures
            i. Implementation
            ii. Responsible Entities
         c. Identification of resources and unmet needs
            i. Funding
            ii. Staff

   ii. **Contiguous Ecosystem**
      <u>Definition:</u> A contiguous urban forest is composed of interconnected, forested corridors for transportation, community, recreation and wildlife throughout the city.
      <u>Ideas:</u> Connectivity. Equitable distribution. Transportation corridors are shaded. Community is connected to commerce and services.

   iii. **Healthy Ecosystem (quality of canopy)**
      <u>Definition:</u> A healthy urban forest is comprised of a diverse, native and uneven-aged palate of species adapted to the unique growing conditions of ecosystem types.
      <u>Ideas:</u> Food for humans and wildlife. Wildlife habitat. Resiliency to disease. Trees are paramount to maintaining the integrity and function of natural systems. Mix of species utilized to achieve sustainable urban forest. Preference for native species

   iv. **Valued**
      <u>Definition:</u> A valued urban forest is recognized as an asset that is essential to the well being of the community and the ecosystem.
      <u>Ideas:</u> Scientifically-based forestry 'voice' represented in long-term decision making. Consistent decisions comply with this Mngt Plan. Trees are paramount to maintaining elements of community and historic character. Trees are valued as a publicly owned utility. Trees are seen as assets rather than liabilities. Cooperative attitude that strengthens stakeholder partnerships to inspire stewardship and community engagement. Interdepartmental cooperation. State of the urban forest report broken down by neighborhood and/or watershed.

Inspires stewardship and community engagement. Community gathering spaces are shaded and trees accent the character of neighborhoods and the history of Austin.

v. Protected

Definition: Trees are protected through sustainable site design and land management practices so that long-term ecosystem health is maintained.

Ideas: Site design (including infill) respects existing trees. Trees are given enough growing space to reach maturity. Development review process is simpler. Living design principles are incorporated into site planning. Trees will be incorporated and credited as an element of green infrastructure. Heritage trees. Property designations denote uses and restrictions by property types and goals. Urban design considers and respects the urban forest. Trees are utilized to mitigate urban heat island effect and air pollution (particulates, etc). City of Austin is carbon neutral. Biological components of infrastructures are realized and utilized. Forested land acquisition priorities have been established to meet urban forestry goals.

vi. Cared For

Definition: A well cared for urban forest is proactively managed for health, longevity and safety.

Ideas: Proactive maintenance ensures most efficient use of budget and staff. Pruning cycle. Innovative irrigation techniques. The City is a leader in tree maintenance and recognizes national standards. Citizens are educated and empowered to care for trees on public and private property. Maintain tree inventory. Quantify trends and conditions of 1) tree inventory and canopy cover for each land use type, 2) tree-crown condition by land use type, 3) carbon and pollutant uptake and 4) street tree conditions. Complete analysis using nationally recognized model

Hierarchy of Steps

1) Vision – sweeping, broad, general, 30,000ft view, so broad that it can't be measured (and you shouldn't try). It isn't vague, but very broad and difficult to measure, if not impossible. Value statement
2) Mission – A direction. A broad, sweeping pathway to a vision.
3) Goals support that the mission. SMART test applies here. (1 – 5yr time frame). Tip: Write the goals, summarize and then write the mission.
4) Recommendations are the components of the SMART test.

Guiding Principles

Use the guiding principles from Imagine Austin as a reference.

Ex: City is starting to use PRIDE.